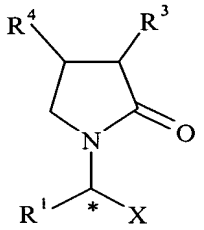
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A process for the preparation of 2-oxo-1-pyrrolidine derivatives of general formula (I), and salts thereof,

wherein :



(I)

R^1 is R^a or R^b;

R^3 and R^4 are the same or different and each is, independently, hydrogen, hydroxy, thiol, halogen, cyano, carboxy, sulfonic acid, R^a, R^b, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, alkylsulfinyl, arylsulfinyl, alkylthio, arylthio, alkoxy, aryloxy, sulfonamide, acyl, ester, amido, acyloxy, esteroxy or amidooxy;

X is $-CONR^5R^6$, $-COOR^7$ or -CN;

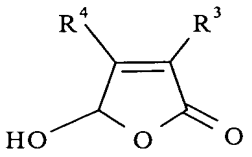
R^5, R^6, R^7 are the same or different, and each is, independently, hydrogen, R^a or R^b;

R^a is C1-20 alkyl or C1-20 alkyl substituted by one or more hydroxy, thiol, halogen, cyano, carboxy, sulfonic acid, R^b, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, alkylsulfinyl, arylsulfinyl, alkylthio, arylthio, alkoxy, aryloxy, sulfonamide, acyl, ester, amido, acyloxy, esteroxy and/or amidooxy;

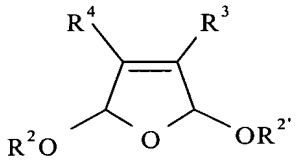
R^b is aryl, heteroaryl, heterocycloalkyl or the same substituted by one or more R^a, hydroxy, thiol, halogen, cyano, carboxy, sulfonic acid, aryl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl, alkylsulfinyl, arylsulfinyl, alkylthio, arylthio, alkoxy, aryloxy,

sulfonamide, heterocycloalkyl, heteroaryl, acyl, ester, amido, acyloxy, esteroxy and/or amidooxy;

comprising the reaction of a furan derivative of formula (II) or (III)



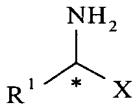
(II)



(III)

wherein R^2 and $R^{2'}$ are the same or different and each is C1-10 alkyl or the same substituted by aryl,

with a compound of formula (IV)



(IV)

and with H_2 in the presence of catalyst.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein a furan derivative of formula (II) is used.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein R^3 is hydrogen.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 2 to 3~~ claim 2, wherein R^4 is R^a or hydrogen.

Claim 5 (Original): The process according to claim 4, wherein R^4 is C1-6 alkyl or C1-6 alkyl substituted by one or more halogens.

Claim 6 (Original): The process according to claim 5, wherein R^4 is n-propyl.

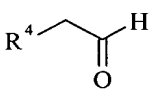
Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein X is $-CONR^5R^6$.

Claim 8 (Original): The process according to claim 7, wherein X is $-CONH_2$.

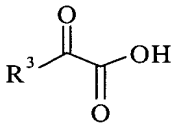
Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein R^1 is C1-6 alkyl.

Claim 10 (Original): The process according to claim 9, wherein R^1 is ethyl.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 2 to 10~~ claim 2, wherein the compound of formula (II) is obtained by reaction of an aldehyde of formula (V) with a ketoacid of formula (VI),



(V)



(VI)

wherein R^3 and R^4 are as defined in claim 1, in the presence of a base.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the compound of formula (IV) is obtained by neutralisation of the corresponding hydrochloride salt.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the catalyst is a Pd, Pt or Ni based catalyst.

Claim 14 (Original): The process according to claim 13, wherein the catalyst is a Pd based catalyst.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein compounds of formula (I) are in the (S)-form or in the (R)-form.

Claim 16 (Original): The process according to claim 15, wherein compounds of formula (I) are in the (S)-form.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein when R^3 and/or R^4 are different from hydrogen the obtained diastereoisomers are further separated.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, which is applied to the preparation of (2S)-2-((4R)-2-oxo-4-n-propyl-1-pyrrolidinyl)butanamide.